
 Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in the United States. According to the 1995 National Survey on Drug Abuse, an average of 10 million Americans use marijuana every month. Marijuana use has risen in the past 12 months from 23.9% to 34.7% among the nation's 12th graders. In 10th graders, the use has risen from 16.5% to 28.7%, and 8th graders' use is up from 6.2% to 15.8%.



Within a few minutes of inhaling marijuana smoke, users are likely to experience dry mouth, rapid heartbeat, some coordination loss and poor sense of balance, slower reaction times, and intoxication. Blood vessels of the eye expand. Blood pressure may rise and can double the normal heart rate. This effect can be greater if marijuana is mixed with other drugs.

 There is a strong link between drug use and abuse and unsafe sex, and the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.